

A Record 581

Chapter 581: Gathering of Immortals

Around an hour ago, right when Han Li achieved full mastery of the fourth level of the Spirit Refinement Technique.

Countless kilometers away from the ravine that Han Li was in, there stood a white mountain that reached all the way up into the clouds.

On the mountain summit was an azure platform that had been constructed out of stone blocks, and at the center of the platform was a square stone table, around which were placed four stone chairs of the same style, but in different colors.

At this moment, three of the stone chairs were occupied.

One of them was occupied by a black-robed young man with a dark complexion. He had a pair of silver horns on his head, and there was a very cold and inhospitable air about him.

The second chair was occupied by a white-robed man who appeared to be 30 to 40 years of age. He was extremely handsome, with a head of flowing white hair, down the middle of which was a lock of eye-catching golden hair.

The final person to complete the trio was a hunch-backed elderly man with red hair and a red beard, holding a crimson cane in one hand.

Hovering above the stone table in front of the trio was a white mirror of water, within which was a swirling expanse of white light.

A dark ravine could just barely be made out beneath the white light, and there were wisps of black qi drifting out of the ravine.

"Those are some very powerful spiritual sense fluctuations... Could it be that someone on Old Man Gu's territory made a breakthrough to the Great Encompassment Stage?" the black-robed young man mused.

"A breakthrough to the Great Encompassment Stage would've triggered far more significant phenomena. If you ask me, this looks like something that would arise from someone cultivating some type of spiritual secret technique," the white-robed man said.

The black-robed man's brows furrowed slightly as he took a glance at the white-robed, then gave a cold harrumph.

The white-robed man paid no heed to him as he turned to the red-haired elderly man and asked, "What do you think, Brother Yu?"

"I'm not too sure what to make of this, but seeing as this is happening on Fellow Daoist Gu's territory, we're in no position to intervene," the red-haired man replied in an ambiguous fashion.

"Today is our once-in-a-million-year gathering, yet Fellow Daoist Gu has already been absent several times in succession, and now, something strange seems to be happening on his territory. I really do wonder what he's up to," the white-robed man sighed as he shook his head with a resigned smile.

"Don't mind him, Fellow Daoist Gu has always been a very mysterious man," the red-haired elderly man chuckled.

"Maybe you should mind your own business instead of prying into Old Man Gu's matters, Brother Liu. Recently, one of your subsidiary branches in the Dark Star Mountain Range suddenly attacked and took over the entire Insect Race territory in that area. How do you explain that, Brother Liu?" the black-robed young man asked.

"So that's what's on your mind! I was wondering why you were being so hostile to me. Both of us have countless descendants spread across the vast primordial land, and they've always lived and died by the laws of natural selection, so why concern yourself with these matters? If you're truly bothered by this, then just send some of your people to recover the territory," the white-robed man replied with a nonchalant smile.

"In that case, I don't believe there's any need for this gathering to drag on any longer. I'll be going ahead now," the black-robed man declared as he suddenly rose to his feet, then abruptly vanished into thin air.

"Looks like Brother Zuo's temper is still as fiery as ever. Brother Liu, I'll also be taking my leave now. See you in a million years," the red-haired elderly man said as he also rose to his feet, then waved his cane through the air, and a white spatial rift appeared in front of him, then slowly widened to form a spatial passageway.

After that, the red-haired elderly man calmly stepped into the spatial passageway and departed as well.

Meanwhile, a faint smile appeared on the white-robed man's face as he mused, "That human brat is quite brave. He's neither advancing or retreating, instead choosing to remain where he is to cultivate. Let's see if he has what it takes to dig himself out of this hole."

As soon as his voice trailed off, the white mirror hovering above the platform abruptly vanished, and the white-robed man was also nowhere to be seen.

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It took Han Li around half a month to fully comprehend the fifth level of the Spirit Refinement Technique.

His spiritual sense was far superior to that of the average Golden Immortal to begin with, and now that he had mastered the fourth level of the Spirit Refinement Technique, he naturally fulfilled the spiritual sense prerequisites to cultivate the fifth level of the Spirit Refinement Technique.

However, the fifth level of the cultivation art was extremely complex, and it seemed that many risks also had to be taken during its cultivation, and that left him a little hesitant about how to proceed.

However, given the impact that the baleful qi in the ravine had on his spiritual sense, it occurred to Han Li that perhaps he could further enhance his own spiritual sense by descending deeper into the ravine.

With that in mind, he stowed the jade slip away, then rose to his feet and recommenced his descent.

However, it didn't take long before Han Li's brows began to furrow slightly, and as he continued his descent, the concern on his face only grew more pronounced.

Contrary to his expectations, the yin winds deeper in the ravine had only become weaker instead of stronger.

Even though the baleful qi was only becoming denser the deeper he went, without those yin winds to complement it, the baleful qi alone wasn't sufficient to conjure up those illusions in his mind.

A disappointed look appeared on Han Li's face, and after a brief pause, he returned to the depth where the yin wind was strongest before sitting down with his legs crossed to try and cultivate the fifth level of the Spirit Refinement Technique.

Half a year flew by in a flash.

As Han Li opened his eyes, a rather frustrated look appeared on his face.

During the past six months, he had been cultivating constantly without rest, but progress had been extremely slow. Not only was progress far slower than when he was able to take advantage of those baleful qi illusions to cultivate the Spirit Refinement Technique, it was significantly slower than even under normal circumstances.

Han Li took a deep breath to compose himself.

Back when he was cultivating the third level of the Spirit Refinement Technique, he had encountered the same problem, but eventually, he was able to master the third level with enough time. However, in this situation, he simply didn't have time to make slow and steady progress.

After some contemplation, he made a hand seal, and his body shuddered slightly, following which all of the surrounding baleful qi abruptly converged toward him, inundating him in the blink of an eye.

All of a sudden, he felt as if he could hear the blood-hurdling howls of countless demon beasts ringing out beside his ears, and at the same time, bursts of sinister and violent intent began infiltrating all parts of his body.

He took a deep breath and didn't channel any of his cultivation arts to defend himself.

Bursts of dense baleful qi surged erratically throughout his body, and it felt as if there were countless tiny daggers twisting in his meridians.

His brows furrowed slightly, but then quickly unfurrowed again, and he promptly devoured a cultivation enhancement pill before channeling his Profound Baleful Spirit Arts.

All of the baleful qi that had accumulated in his body instantly erupted forth, manifesting itself as a vast expanse of black light that resembled a cloud of dense mist.

The black light instantly fused as one with the surrounding baleful qi, stirring up the nearby baleful qi into a frenzy, causing them to form a series of vortexes around him before surging into his body at an even faster rate than before.

All of a sudden, Han Li was completely inundated by a dense black cloud, and he felt as if there were countless needles piercing into his skin.

As he continued to channel the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts, the bursts of erratic baleful qi in his body began to converge toward a single point, forming a vast wave of baleful qi.

He couldn't help but give a muffled groan, and his brows became tightly furrowed with agony.

Earlier, the bursts of baleful qi had been spread out all over his body, and they had caused him some pain, but it wasn't all that severe. However, now that all of the baleful qi had converged to one place, the pain was far more unbearable than before.

Thankfully, there didn't seem to be any other detrimental effects aside from the excruciating pain for now, and Han Li was able to grit his teeth and persevere as he directed the baleful qi toward his 62nd immortal acupoint.

He was well aware of the fact that because this was extraneous baleful qi that he hadn't accumulated in his body, he would instinctively reject it. On top of that, this extraneous baleful qi was only going to be even more ferocious and untamed than the baleful qi that was already in his body.

Similarly, the sinister and violent intent imbued in this baleful qi was only going to be even more ferocious, and if he wasn't careful, it could easily overwhelm his immortal acupoints and completely destroy his consciousness.

However, time was of the essence here, and extreme measures had to be taken, so despite the severe degree of risk involved, he was still planning to use this extraneous baleful qi to help him open up his immortal acupoints.

"It's... still... not enough..." Han Li spat through gritted teeth with tightly furrowed brows.

He made a rapid string of hand seals, and the black light around him brightened significantly, while the rate of influx of baleful qi sped up by twofold, but at the same time, the pain also became twice as unbearable.

Han Li forcibly suppressed the excruciating pain as he continued to absorb more baleful qi into his own body before channeling it toward his immortal acupoint.

The baleful qi within the ravine began to churn violently, causing the demon beast carcasses on the cliff faces on either side of the ravine to tumble down before shattering into powdered bone and specks of fluorescent flames in mid-air.

As time slowly passed, the baleful qi in the surrounding area began to thin out, while the baleful qi directly around Han Li became denser and denser.

Over three months passed by in a flash.

On this day, a resounding boom suddenly rang out within the ravine.

Deep within the ravine, Han Li was hovering in mid-air, and a small vortex was taking shape on his back beneath his shoulder blades. The vortex was voraciously absorbing the world's origin qi that was surging down from above the ravine, and only after close to 20 seconds had passed did the influx of the world's origin qi slowly subside.

At this point, the vortex had been replaced by a speck of golden light, and it was none other than Han Li's 62nd immortal acupoint!

Han Li took a moment to inspect the immortal acupoint, and he discovered that aside from the vast amount of immortal spiritual power within it, there was a large quantity of baleful qi as well, far more than what was present in his previous immortal acupoints.

It was clear that opening acupoints using extraneous baleful qi was different from doing so using one's innate baleful qi.

Chapter 583: Bottom of the Ravine

A resounding boom rang out as the sky above the ravine shuddered, and wisps of the world's origin qi that were visible to the naked eye converged from all directions, forming an enormous funnel in the sky, directing a vast quantity of the world's origin qi into the ravine.

In the valley not far away from the ravine, a giant human face appeared on a huge tree, then cast its gaze toward the ravine. The root system beneath it also began to rustle violently as the entire tree moved toward the ravine.

The ground within the valley split open as the trees on either side moved back to clear a wide path, allowing the giant tree demon free passage.

There was a perplexed look on the tree demon's faces as it rushed through the valley, but it suddenly stopped cold in its tracks as it discovered that the vast funnel of the world's origin qi was hovering directly above the ravine that was filled with baleful qi.

A wary look appeared on its face upon seeing this, and after a brief hesitation, it suddenly turned around before rushing back into the valley.

Meanwhile, hundreds of kilometers deep in the ravine, Han Li was standing in mid-air, glowing as brightly as the sun, and the golden light radiating from his body was keeping all of the surrounding baleful qi over 100 feet away from him.

The radiant golden light formed countless threads that intertwined with one another to create a golden cocoon that enveloped his entire body, and only a faint silhouette was visible through it.

The vast world's origin qi that had been funneled into the area came cascading down like an enormous golden waterfall, forming a massive rippling vortex around the golden cocoon.

No light had reached this point in the ravine for countless years, yet the entire area was suddenly illuminated by the radiant golden light, and even though it was unable to completely shine through the dense baleful qi, it was still a stunning sight to behold.

The golden waterfall continued to cascade down for three whole days before finally fading, following which a roar of exaltation suddenly rang out from within the ravine.

A burst of scorching golden light rose up within the giant golden cocoon, and it swept through the cocoon like a sword to slice it into two.

Han Li flew out of the cocoon with golden light flashing in his eyes, then opened his mouth to release a burst of tremendous suction force, drawing all of the golden light in the ravine into his belly, and the golden cocoon also disintegrated into specks of golden light before surging into his mouth.

At the same time, a speck of golden light appeared on his back, and it was flashing incessantly while absorbing the residual world's origin qi in the air.

With that, his 84th immortal acupoint had finally been opened!

Just like his previous immortal acupoints, this one also had some hints of black baleful qi within it, and it was actually even more apparent in this particular immortal acupoint.

Han Li swept a hand through the air with a calm expression, and his Mantra Treasured Axis appeared in front of him amid a flash of golden light, then began to revolve on the spot while releasing waves of golden ripples.

At this point, there were over 400 Time Dao Runes on the axis, and all of them lit up in unison. At the same time, there were also now as many as 18 time law threads wrapped around the Mantra Treasured Axis.

Han Li raised a hand to make a beckoning motion, and the 18 time law threads immediately turned as straight as arrows before flying toward him, only to curl around his fingers upon reaching him.

Sensing the energy fluctuations emanating from the time law threads, Han Li murmured to himself, "I didn't think that I would attain so many additional time law threads by mastering the fourth level of the Mantra Axis Scripture. Now that the Mantra Treasured Axis has become even more powerful, I'll stand a better chance against the Gold Devouring Immortal."

As soon as his voice trailed off, he swept a sleeve through the air to stow the Mantra Treasured Axis away again.

As all of the golden light around him faded, the surrounding baleful qi converged once again to inundate him.

Han Li had absorbed much of the baleful qi in this area, so it wasn't as dense as it had originally been, but down below was still a vast expanse of impenetrable darkness, and it seemed that the density of the baleful qi deeper in the ravine hadn't changed at all.

Han Li took a deep breath, then sat down with his legs crossed and swallowed a cultivation base consolidation pill before closing his eyes to meditate.

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Three days and three nights later, Han Li reopened his eyes, then rose to his feet.

There's not much time left until the 20 years are up, so it's about time that I discussed some strategy with Brother Xie and the others...

With that in mind, Han Li cast his gaze upward, yet right as he was about to ascend out of the ravine, a familiar voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

"Fellow Daoist Han, we've already made it to this point, don't you want to go to the bottom of the ravine to see what's down there?"

Han Li's expression changed slightly upon hearing this, following which he asked with furrowed brows, "Didn't I already cut off your perception of the outside world? How do you know where I am right now?"

"Please don't misunderstand, Fellow Daoist Han, I'm not to blame for this. It's just that the sudden drastic increase of the baleful qi in your body has strengthened my connection to the outside world slightly," Mo Guang hurriedly explained.

"Aren't you a Heavenly Devilish Monarch? I never knew that you could make use of baleful qi," Han Li mused as he raised an eyebrow.

"Baleful qi is not something that only humans and demon beasts possess. Instead, it arises within all living beings who have taken the lives of others. On top of that, our Heavenly Devils are even more sensitive to these types of negative energies than humans," Mo Guang explained.

While conversing with Mo Guang, Han Li covertly examined the connection between himself and Mo Guang, and he was relieved to find that there was indeed nothing amiss.

"Why have you suddenly proposed for me to go to the bottom of the ravine, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang? Have you discovered something?"

"Not exactly, I only have a vague feeling that there seems to be something very special down there. This is only a suggestion from me. If you feel like it's not worth the trip, then don't worry about it," Mo Guang replied.

After a brief silence, Han Li decided, "It can't hurt to go down and have a look."

With that, he continued to descend deeper into the ravine.

After descending for several hundred kilometers, the surrounding baleful qi had become so dense that even Han Li was feeling rather uncomfortable, despite his current cultivation base and spiritual sense.

By drawing upon the baleful qi in the ravine to open up his immortal acupoints for such an extended period of time, both his body and soul had undergone some slight changes, allowing him to gradually integrate himself into this environment.

However, the 20-year time limit was fast approaching, and there wasn't enough time left to make any further significant progress, so he had decided that he was immediately going to turn back if the baleful qi were to become too dense to bear.

However, right at this moment, an enormous green skeleton suddenly appeared in his field of view.

The skeleton was long and sleek, with a spine that resembled a winding ridge. On either side of the spine were racks of ribs, beneath which the bones of the creature's four limbs were still intact. On top of that, the limbs were all standing straight, supporting the skeleton in an upright position, as if it had died standing and remained that way, even in death.

Han Li flew down until he landed beside the skeleton, and by his estimates, he was currently at least 1,000 kilometers away from the entrance of the ravine up above.

He walked around the mountainous skeleton until he was standing directly in front of it, and he discovered that the skull of the skeleton was resting on the ground, while bursts of baleful qi were rising up incessantly out of its massive eye sockets before spreading into the surrounding space.

The head was quite wide up top, but then tapered to a point, and there was a pair of massive front teeth protruding out of front of its long mouth, giving it the appearance of a massive rat.

Han Li immediately recalled the giant green rat that he had seen in the baleful qi illusions earlier, and it occurred to him that this seemed to be the rat's carcass.

At the very center of the giant rat's glabella was a hole with smooth and even edges that pierced all the way through the back of its head, and it seemed that had been the killing blow.

The skeleton was already completely devoid of spiritual power fluctuations, but as Han Li stood in its presence, he was still struck by a sense of insignificance and inferiority, as if he were standing before a vast mountain.

What was particularly noteworthy about the giant rat were its two front teeth, which were of a slightly darker green color than the rest of its body, and there were bursts of clear law power fluctuations emanating from them.

Han Li was rather curious to see this, and he was just about to take a closer look when he suddenly noticed that the body of a purple-robed man was laying behind the giant rat's head.

A hint of surprise appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this.

The body of the man was largely quite well preserved, but it was looking extremely wizened, and its skin was a purplish-green color. On top of that, its clothes were in complete tatters, and there was a layer of black dust-like granular substance all over the entire body.

Han Li skirted around the giant rat's head to approach the body, and he was immediately struck by a wave of incredibly fierce baleful qi, causing him to stop in his tracks as his brows became tightly furrowed.

He cast his gaze toward the body's face to find that its features didn't actually appear very old, and it was only due to its severely sunken cheeks and eyes that it had initially appeared like a wizened elderly man.

Within its sunken eye sockets, the body's eyes were still open, and what was particularly harrowing was that its pupils were a completely dull and lifeless gray color.

Chapter 584: Two Bodies

This is a Gray Immortal... No wonder I felt a slightly familiar aura just now...

Just like Mo Yu from the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor, this purple-robed body had also belonged to a Gray Immortal.

His gaze roamed back and forth between the two bodies, following which he turned his attention to the baleful qi in the surrounding area, and he immediately realized that these two bodies were the source of the terrifying baleful qi in the ravine.

Han Li didn't get too close, keeping his distance as he made a lap around the Gray Immortal's body, and he didn't spot many injuries on the body. In fact, the only one he could see was an uneven wound on its right temple, and that wound seemed to have been somewhat corroded as there was a dark green coloration on its jagged edges.

Judging from what he could see, it appeared that the giant rat and this Gray Immortal had fought in a battle countless years ago, ultimately leading to their mutual demise.

Perhaps this enormous ravine had been created during the course of their battle.

Han Li withdrew his gaze from the Gray Immortal as he returned his attention to the giant rat carcass, and a contemplative look appeared on his face.

Even though it's already been dead for countless years, its body is still giving off such formidable spiritual power fluctuations. If I can get Jin Tong to devour it, perhaps she'll be able to advance further in her cultivation base...

With that in mind, Han Li cast his gaze toward the rat's two massive front teeth, then raised a hand, and an Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Sword appeared in his grasp.

He injected his immortal spiritual power into the sword before lashing out at the base of the pair of front teeth, and a sharp clang rang out as a burst of dark green light erupted out of the base of the teeth.

A wave of formidable sword qi surged through the air alongside the eruption of dark green light, and a burst of intensely corrosive energy fluctuations surged forth from within the teeth.

A burst of azure light rose up around Han Li's body, and only then was he able to keep this corrosive aura at bay.

Close to 20 seconds later, the corrosive aura fluctuations gradually subsided, and an elated look had appeared on Han Li's face.

Even though he hadn't gone all-out in that attack just now, it was still quite extraordinary that the rat's teeth had managed to remain completely unscathed.

After a brief pause, Han Li summoned three Azure Bamboo Cloudswarm Swords at once, then combined the three into a single sword. Arcs of electricity surged over the sword alongside bursts of formidable sword qi as he lashed out once again at the base of the teeth, and only then did the pair of teeth fall out of the giant rat's mouth.

Han Li gently exhaled as he stowed the swords and the pair of front teeth away, then made his way over to the body of the Gray Immortal to conduct a closer inspection.

The purple robe on the body appeared to be made from quite an exceptional material, but unfortunately, it was already ruined.

Han Li swept a sleeve through the air, releasing a burst of azure light to flip the body over, and a gray cloth pouch fell out.

An elated look appeared in Han Li's eyes as he hurriedly picked up the cloth pouch before injecting his spiritual sense into it, and sure enough, it was a storage pouch!

He emptied the contents of the storage pouch onto the ground, and to his slight dismay, it only amounted to an unexpectedly small pile of items, most of which were materials that were either gray or black in color.

Han Li swept his gaze over the pile of items, and several fist-sized black crystals suddenly caught his interest.

The crystals were giving off a faint black glow that seemed to be capable of devouring all of the surrounding light, and they were also releasing formidable law power fluctuations. These were none other than Black Marrow Crystal, the primary ingredient for refining Origin Void Pills.

Furthermore, these Black Marrow Crystals were clearly of a far superior quality to the ones that Wyrms had given him.

Han Li swept a sleeve through the air, releasing a burst of azure light that picked up one of the Black Marrow Crystals for a closer inspection, then stowed all of the Black Marrow Crystals away.

Outside of the Black Marrow Crystals, most of the materials on the ground were unfamiliar to Han Li, but many of them were giving off powerful energy fluctuations that weren't inferior to those of the Black Marrow Crystals.

In particular, there were three items that were giving off energy fluctuations that set them apart from everything else.

One of these items was a gray bone that was around a foot in length. It was extremely hard, and if it weren't for the gray patterns present on its surface, it would appear no different from a normal rock. It was clear that this was a very ancient artifact, but Han Li had no idea what type of creature the bone belonged to.

The second item was a large black spirit flower with crimson spirit patterns on all of its flower petals, and they connected together to form the design of an unsettling smiling face.

The final one of the three items was a vial of gray liquid. A layer of gray flames could be seen on the surface of the liquid, but it was somehow giving off an intense chill that could be felt even through the vial.

The auras of these materials were completely different from those of normal spirit materials, so Han Li could only presume that these things could only be found in the Gray Realm.

After conducting a brief inspection, he stowed all of these materials away, and the only things that remained on the ground were a pair of immortal treasures and a black jade box.

One of the immortal treasures was a black spear with an antiquated shaft and a gleaming black spearhead, within which a red mark could be seen, giving off formidable killing intent.

The other immortal treasure was a gray veil that was as thin as a cicada's wing, and it was etched with numerous star designs that were giving off a faint gray glow.

Han Li bent down to pick up the black spear, but to his surprise, it was extraordinarily heavy, almost comparable in weight to his Heavy Water True Axis.

He mustered up some more strength to pick up the black spear, then thrust it forward thrice in rapid succession, and three vibrant spear projections instantly emerged before exploding one after the other, causing the nearby space to tremble violently.

Han Li's eyes immediately lit up upon seeing this, and he began injecting his immortal spiritual power into the spear, but the influx of immortal spiritual power didn't draw any reaction out of the spear.

Han Li raised an eyebrow upon seeing this, but it then occurred to him that the energy in a Gray Immortal's body had to have been completely different from immortal spiritual power, so this was most likely a weapon that could only be used by a Gray Immortal.

With that in mind, a disappointed look appeared in his eyes, and he was just about to stow the spear away when he suddenly noticed that a thin layer of black light had appeared on its surface.

As it turned out, while injecting immortal spiritual power into the spear, some of the baleful qi in his immortal acupoints had also surged into it, and that had drawn a slight reaction out of the spear.

Could it be that this weapon can be powered by baleful qi?

With that in mind, Han Li released the pent-up baleful qi in his body, and it began to swirl around him as a cloud of black mist.

He then slowly guided the baleful qi into the spear, and the black light emanating from it instantly brightened significantly.

At the same time, the red mark in the spearhead also began to glow radiantly while releasing strands of crimson light that circled around the tip of the spear incessantly.

To Han Li's surprise, this weapon really could be powered using his baleful qi.

However, he could tell that this was a weapon of an extremely high caliber, and that he was only able to tap into a small portion of its power.

After stowing the black spear away, he picked up the gray veil, which was as soft and insubstantial as a cloud and as light as a feather.

Han Li inspected the veil briefly, then injected his baleful qi into it, and a layer of gray light instantly emerged over the veil, which had also become several times thicker than before.

At the same time, a series of antiquated patterns appeared on its surface, and in contrast with normal spirit patterns, these ones seemed to be far more haphazard, but also somehow more profound.

In this thicker form, the veil was still very soft and pliable, but also extremely resilient, indicating that it was an exceptional defensive material.

Right at this moment, a curious look appeared in his eyes as his gaze settled upon the patterns on the veil's surface.

These patterns were somewhat familiar to him, and he felt as if he had seen them before somewhere.

It didn't take long before he recalled exactly where he had seen something like this before, and he immediately summoned a silver jade box, within which was a piece of soft material. This was none other than the mysterious gray cloth that he had obtained from Xiong Shan.

He spread the gray cloth open, and there were some enigmatic patterns etched on its surface. These patterns were slightly different from the ones on the veil, but it was clear that they were of the same style.

Looks like this gray cloth is also from the Gray Realm...

With that in mind, Han Li injected his baleful qi into the cloth, but it displayed no response.

Han Li raised an eyebrow upon seeing this, and he began to wonder if he was mistaken.

However, he continued to persevere, injecting more and more baleful qi into the gray cloth, but even after a full 15 minutes had passed by, the cloth still wasn't displaying any reaction.

Han Li grew a little disheartened upon seeing this, and he was just about to withdraw his baleful qi when a layer of faint gray light suddenly appeared over the cloth's surface, a layer of light so faint that it was barely detectable at all.

Han Li's eyes immediately lit up upon seeing this, and he took a deep breath before redoubling his efforts, further increasing the outflow of baleful qi.

The light emanating from the gray cloth gradually became brighter and brighter, and the antiquated patterns on its surface also slowly lit up while becoming clearer and clearer.

However, even as Han Li continued to inject more baleful qi into the gray cloth beyond this point, the light emanating from it didn't become any brighter, nor did the antiquated patterns on its surface become any clearer.

It looks like I don't possess sufficient baleful qi to fully reveal what's on the cloth, Han Li thought to himself, then stopped what he was doing and inspected the gray cloth for a while longer before stowing it away again.

The cloth was something that Han Li had obtained by chance anyway, so it would naturally be great if he could uncover its secrets, but even if he couldn't, it wasn't going to weigh on his mind.

After that, he stowed the gray veil away as well, then picked up the black jade box, which was sealed by a gray talisman.

Chapter 585: Split Soul

Han Li's gaze rested on the gray talisman for a moment, and he discovered that the runes on it were drastically different from normal runes, but the patterns on the gray cloth and the gray veil were rather similar.

After some contemplation, he cast an incantation seal onto the talisman, and a layer of gray light instantly appeared over its surface to repel the incantation seal.

Han Li raised an eyebrow as a burst of golden light that was giving off faint time law power fluctuations emerged from his hand, yet that was also repelled upon making contact with the gray talisman.

His expression remained unchanged, and this time, he channeled the baleful qi in his body before attempting to make contact with the gray talisman again.

This time, the gray light on the talisman flashed momentarily before fading away, and it didn't reject the baleful qi.

Han Li was very encouraged to see this, and he immediately began injecting baleful qi into the talisman.

The seal within the talisman wasn't actually all that complex, and he was quickly able to undo it.

Around 15 minutes later, the gray talisman flew off the black jade box on its own, following which the box sprang open to reveal a crimson mask inside.

Han Li picked up the mask, and a surprised look appeared on his face.

This was a crimson mask assigned to the Reincarnation Disciples of the Reincarnation Palace. It was quite similar in appearance to his dragon mask, and the words "Dragon 4" were inscribed upon it.

"Dragon 4... Could it be that this Gray Immortal was from the Reincarnation Palace?" Han Li murmured to himself.

The Reincarnation Palace mask given to him by Wyrn 3 bore the words "Dragon 5".

Han Li didn't think much of this as he stowed both the mask and the jade box away, then turned his attention back to the body of the Gray Immortal.

Right at this moment, Mo Guang's voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

"Looks like we're in luck, Fellow Daoist Han. This is a very well-preserved Gray Immortal body, and this Gray Immortal was most likely at the High Zenith Stage back when they were alive."

"So what? No matter how powerful they were, they're nothing but a corpse now. Why do you sound so excited, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang?" Han Li asked.

"Back when I was with Ma Liang, I came across a scripture in a set of ruins that contained some information pertaining to Gray Immortals. That scripture contained a secret technique that can be used to refine the body of a Gray Immortal into an avatar. After obtaining this scripture, Ma Liang had always wanted to find a Gray Immortal body, but wasn't able to do so. I certainly wasn't expecting to find one here," Mo Guang explained.

"Is that right?"

Han Li was quite intrigued to hear this.

Back in the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor, he had witnessed just how powerful the High Zenith Stage Mo Yu was, and if he could come into possession of a High Zenith Stage Gray Immortal avatar, then he would stand a much better chance against the Gold Devouring Immortal.

"I wouldn't dare to lie to you, Fellow Daoist Han. Gray Immortals are different from normal cultivators in that following their demise, the energy in their bodies won't quickly dissipate. Instead, most of it remains in their body, thereby making it possible to refine their bodies into avatars. You're truly in luck, Fellow Daoist Han. If you can successfully refine this body into an avatar, then you'll be able to use it against that Gold Devouring Immortal," Mo Guang said.

"Show me the refinement method," Han Li requested.

Mo Guang immediately emerged from the shadow beneath his feet, following which Han Li handed a white jade slip to him, and Mo Guang accepted the jade slip, then made a copy of the refinement method before handing it back to Han Li.

After briefly inspecting the refinement method in the jade slip, Han Li's brows began to furrow slightly.

The refinement method was quite different from normal avatar refinement methods, and many prerequisites had to be satisfied, one of which was that the user had to possess tremendous baleful qi.

During the refinement process, the user had to inject their baleful qi into several important points in the Gray Immortal's body in order to be able to control it.

Secondly, the user had to split their own soul using a special secret technique, then use another secret technique to fuse their baleful qi and a split portion of their soul, converting it into a baleful soul that could possess the Gray Immortal's body.

Only with both conditions met could one ensure complete control over the avatar.

"The first condition is easy to meet, but the second condition, the one that requires splitting one's soul before creating a baleful soul, is that detrimental to the user in any way?" Han Li asked.

"There will inevitably be some detrimental effects that arise from splitting one's soul, and following the conversion into a baleful soul, it'll regularly transmit negative emotions of violence and bloodlust into the user's mind. However, that's only to be expected. The energy in a Gray Immortal's body is directly contrary to that of a cultivator, so the two will conflict with each other.

"If a normal soul were to enter a Gray Immortal's body, it would quickly be destroyed. Only after a conversion into a baleful soul would it be able to reside long-term in a Gray Immortal's body," Mo Guang replied.

The excitement in Han Li's heart slowly faded upon hearing this.

If he could refine this Gray Immortal body into an avatar at only a minor cost, then he would be happy to pursue this option, but not only was this soul splitting technique going to be very harmful to his soul, it would also affect him on an emotional level, and those consequences were simply unacceptably severe.

"If you feel like the detrimental effects are too much, there's actually another solution," Mo Guang suddenly said.

"What is it?" Han Li asked.

"It's very simple: you can allow me to enter the Gray Immortal's body in the place of your split soul," Mo Guang replied.

Han Li was very surprised to hear this.

"I am a Heavenly Devilish Monarch," Mo Guang continued. "I possess no form or substance, which makes me very similar to a soul. On top of that, I possess a very high level of natural resistance to the energy in the bodies of Gray Immortals, so I should be able to enter the body just fine."

Han Li was silent for a moment upon hearing this, then asked, "Fellow Daoist Mo Guang, how long has it been since we signed our contract back in the Spirit Realm?"

"I'm always in a state of slumber, so I don't have much of a concept of the passage of time, but it should've been at least 10,000 years by now. Why do you ask, Fellow Daoist Han?" Mo Guang asked.

"Given how many years we've been together, I'm sure you're very familiar with my personality, and I'm sure you would've known that I wouldn't have agreed to using the soul splitting technique. From the very beginning, your plan was to possess this body yourself, right?" Han Li asked.

Mo Guang's expression stiffened slightly upon hearing this, following which a wry smile appeared on his face as he sighed, "Looks like I can't hide anything from you. My intention was indeed to possess this Gray Immortal body myself, but I don't harbor any ill will toward you. All I want is to be able to help you in the upcoming battle against the Gold Devouring Immortal. If you're killed by the Gold Devouring Immortal, I'll also be in a terrible situation."

"That's the extent of your intentions?" Han Li asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"Of course, I also want to attain more power for myself. You've already reached the late-Golden Immortal Stage, while Jin Tong and Daoist Xie have both reached the Golden Immortal Stage as well, leaving me as the only one still stuck at the True Immortal Stage, and it's not a good feeling to be left behind like this," Mo Guang sighed with a hint of dejection on his face.

Han Li remained silent as he stared at Mo Guang with a contemplative look in his eyes.

Moments later, he suddenly raised a hand to release a burst of azure light that enveloped the Gray Immortal's body.

Strands of translucent azure light emerged before wrapping themselves around the body, quickly forming a cocoon around it.

As a result, the immense baleful qi being released by the body was sealed in and unable to spread through the surrounding area.

"We'll discuss this matter some other time," Han Li said as he stowed the cocoon away.

Mo Guang nodded in response, then vanished into Han Li's shadow again.

After that, Han Li returned to the giant rat carcass with slightly furrowed brows.

The giant rat carcass contained immense spiritual power, but as one of the sources of baleful qi in this place, it also contained tremendous baleful qi, so it was definitely inedible to Jin Tong and Xiao Bai.

However, there was a solution to this.

After some contemplation, Han Li swept a sleeve through the air to summon a stack of array plates and array flags, then set them up near the rat carcass.

A day and a night later, a gourd-shaped array had taken shape around the carcass, and within the array were four black rings the size of round tables.

The lines in the array were particularly concentrated near these rings, indicating that they were the four most important points in the array.

Han Li began to chant an incantation while making a hand seal, and specks of black spiritual light emerged all over the gourd-shaped array.

In particular, four pillars of black light had erupted out of the four rings, and they were swaying back and forth like the tentacles of a living creature.

All of a sudden, Han Li switched to a different hand seal, and the four pillars of black light instantly shot into the giant rat's carcass in unison.

The immense baleful qi surging out of the carcass instantly subsided, following which countless black runes abruptly appeared within it.

Immediately thereafter, a dull thump rang out, and the baleful qi flowing out of the giant rat carcass became even denser, and the rate of outflow had also sped up by severalfold.

Countless waves of incredibly dense baleful qi were spreading through the surrounding area, plunging the bottom of the ravine into complete darkness, and Han Li was quite pleased to see this.

This array was something that he had created on the spot using several other different arrays as a foundation, and he wasn't sure if it was going to work, but thankfully, it was working exactly as planned.

Han Li began to make a rapid string of hand seals to operate the array, but right at this moment, the giant rat carcass abruptly shuddered, following which a string of loud cracks began to ring out.

At the same time, two specks of green light emerged within its eye sockets, and they resembled a pair of eyes that were directed at Han Li.

Han Li immediately felt as if he had been plunged into a glacial pit at the sight of its scrutiny, and his back instantly became drenched in cold sweat.

If the giant rat carcass had somehow sprung back to life, then he was in an enormous amount of danger! With that in mind, he hurriedly sprang back in retreat as a streak of azure light.

Almost at the exact same moment, the giant rat carcass opened its mouth to release a green shadow that hurtled directly toward Han Li.

The green shadow was moving far faster than Han Li, and it reached him in the blink of an eye before attempting to pierce into his body.

Right at this moment, countless arcs of bright golden lightning suddenly emerged over Han Li's body amid a rumbling thunderclap, and they rapidly converged to form a single thick bolt of light to oppose the green shadow.

Chapter 586: Averting a Crisis

A resounding boom rang out as the bolt of golden lightning exploded violently upon making contact with the green shadow. The entire surrounding area was instantly illuminated a bright golden color, while the nearby space shuddered violently.

The green shadow that had shot out of the rat carcass's mouth was also sent flying back by over 100 feet.

However, it remained completely unscathed, and after steadying itself, it launched itself at Han Li once again, this time even faster than before.

Han Li immediately let loose a loud roar as he summoned his Mantra Treasured Axis, which began releasing countless waves of golden ripples around him.

Everything in the surrounding area instantly fell still, including the churning baleful qi and the trembling space, and at this point, the green shadow was only about 10 feet away from Han Li.

A faint sheen of cold sweat had appeared on his head, and he heaved a faint sigh of relief.

The green shadow was extraordinarily fast, and if it weren't for his lightning-fast reactions and his time law powers, it would've definitely already pierced into his body.

He wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, then began to inspect the green shadow with a hint of intrigue in his eyes.

Right at this moment, the green shadow suddenly trembled slightly, then released a burst of bright green light that stained the surrounding golden ripples green as well.

Han Li was very alarmed to see this, yet before he had a chance to do anything, a burst of formidable law powers suddenly erupted out of the green shadow.

A green line then shot out of the green shadow, hurtling directly toward Han Li at a terrifying speed, and it was slicing straight through the golden ripples in its path.

However, slicing through the golden rippled was clearly very arduous for the green line, as evidenced by the fact that the light emanating from it was rapidly dimming, but in the end, it was still able to reach Han Li.

All of a sudden, the green shadow trembled once again before abruptly becoming extremely thin, resembling a sheet of green paper, and it also flew toward Han Li behind the green line, covering a distance of around 10 feet in the blink of an eye.

Before Han Li had a chance to react, the green shadow had already vanished into his body, immediately following which it transformed into a burst of tremendous baleful qi that spread rapidly throughout his entire body.

As the baleful qi flowed through Han Li's body, all of his meridians instantly became numb and as cold as ice, rendering him completely immobilized and unable to muster up any immortal spiritual power.

The golden light radiating from his body rapidly faded away, as did the surrounding golden ripples, and he found himself completely enveloped within a layer of faint green light.

All of this had taken place in the blink of an eye, giving him no time to react.

His heart immediately sank, but he remained calm as his mind began racing to find a way out of this predicament.

Right at this moment, a burst of sinister cackling suddenly rang out within his mind, and a glowing green rat suddenly appeared in his consciousness, then immediately pounced at his nascent soul.

The golden nascent soul's eyes sprang open, and a furious look appeared on its face as it rubbed its hands together before thrusting them forward, instantly releasing a translucent sword projection to strike the green rat.

Even though Han Li's immortal spiritual power had become completely stagnant, his spiritual sense remained uninhibited, and the green rat was instantly sliced into two.

However, the green rat was completely unfazed, and it wasn't even slowed down in the slightest as it continued to pounce at Han Li's nascent soul, this time as two balls of green light.

The nascent soul's brows furrowed tightly upon seeing this, and it raised its hands again to release a pair of translucent chains, which ensnared the two balls of green light in the blink of an eye, but didn't constrict any further for fear of splitting the green rat's body up into additional segments.

The two balls of green light immediately began to struggle frantically within the translucent chains, and even though they weren't very bright, they were imbued with immense spiritual power.

As they struggled, the pair of chains around them began trembling incessantly, and they were displaying signs of loosening.

The nascent soul made a hand seal, and the two chains instantly intertwined with each other. At the same time, several more translucent chains emerged before also quickly intertwining with one another.

A cage of chains quickly took shape, and it was none other than Han Li's Spiritual Sense Cage, which had trapped both of the balls of green light inside.

The two balls of green light fused as one to form a single green rat again, and there was an alarmed and furious look on its face as it struggled against the Spiritual Sense Cage with all its might while also tearing viciously at it with its teeth.

The Spiritual Sense Cage was trembling incessantly, but it was able to hold firm.

However, before Han Li even had a chance to catch his breath, the immense baleful qi that had been brought into his body by the green shadow suddenly became extremely erratic.

With the green rat trapped in the Spiritual Sense Cage, there was no one to control the baleful qi, and it had erupted into a chaotic frenzy.

Han Li was still unable to channel his immortal spiritual power, but the baleful qi in his body had emerged on its own upon sensing the extraneous baleful qi.

As a result, a cloud of dense black mist appeared over his entire body.

The baleful qi released by the green shadow immediately fused into the black mist surrounding Han Li, and the cloud of mist began to swell drastically in size, as if it were receiving tremendous sustenance.

At the same time, Han Li's Profound Baleful Spirit Arts was activated on its own, and it was rapidly absorbing the extraneous baleful qi.

All of a sudden, a horrified look appeared on the face of the green rat that was trapped in the Spiritual Sense Cage, and it began to screech frantically in a state of panic.

The green light emanating from its body was flashing erratically, and with the absorption of this extraneous baleful qi, the rat's body began to shrink at a very slow rate, much like a deflating balloon.

Han Li faltered slightly upon seeing this, but a thought then suddenly seemed to have occurred to him, and a complex look flashed through his eyes.

Inside his spiritual sense, his nascent soul continued to focus on keeping the green rat contained in the Spiritual Sense Cage.

As the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts continued to operate, the surrounding baleful qi also began to churn violently before flooding into Han Li's body. Furthermore, the immense baleful qi emanating from the giant rat carcass had formed a thick pillar of baleful qi, which was also surging incessantly into his body.

All of a sudden, Han Li was experiencing a completely unprecedented rate of baleful qi influx.

As the vast volumes of baleful qi surged into his body, it formed an enormous wave that crashed toward his closed immortal acupoints.

Han Li was astonished by what he was seeing, but at this moment, he was still completely immobilized, so he could only look on helplessly as the situation continued to unfold.

The immortal acupoints in his body were quickly beginning to loosen in the face of this overpowering wave of baleful qi, and they were forced open one after another.

Within mere moments, three of his immortal acupoints had been opened in rapid succession!

Han Li was ecstatic to see this, but his elation quickly turned to concern as his face suddenly turned a dark crimson color.

With his immortal acupoints being opened so forcefully and aggressively, his meridians were trembling violently, and the resulting pain was countless times more severe than when he had previously been channeling baleful toward his immortal acupoints.

However, there was nothing that he could do aside from grit his teeth and fight back the pain.

As time passed, Han Li's Profound Baleful Spirit Arts began to operate in overdrive, and all of the baleful qi released by the green shadow was quickly integrated into his own baleful qi.

At this point, the green rat in the Spiritual Sense Cage had shrunk down to nothing more than a tiny speck, and with one final screech of despair, it disintegrated into nothingness.

Han Li was quite relieved to see this, and he withdrew his Spiritual Sense Cage.

With all of the extraneous baleful qi absorbed, he was able to regain control over his own body, but the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts were still completely out of his control, continuing to rapidly channel the surrounding baleful qi toward his immortal acupoints.

Two dull thumps rang out in rapid succession as two more immortal acupoints were opened.

Han Li shuddered as the crimson coloration of his complexion deepened even further. A trail of blood began to trickle down from the corner of his lips, which his chest heaved violently, and his aura was becoming very erratic.

He hurriedly channeled his immortal spiritual power to protect his own body and meridians, but he ultimately decided not to attempt to arrest the frenzied operation of the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts.

After what seemed like an eternity, the density of the baleful qi around Han Li had reached a terrifying level, and it looked as if there were balls of black flames dancing all over his body.

His face had turned such a dark shade of crimson that it was virtually black, and blood continued to flow down from the corners of his lips, but his eyes were filled with elation.

At this point, 106 immortal acupoints had already been opened in his body, yet the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts was still operating in overdrive, frantically devouring the surrounding baleful qi.

A dull thump rang out within Han Li's body as yet another immortal acupoint was opened, and he shuddered as he involuntarily threw up a mouthful of blood, but the elation in his eyes only became more pronounced.

With 107 immortal acupoints opened, he had reached the pinnacle of the Golden Immortal Stage, and just a single step further would take him to the High Zenith Stage.

Right at this moment, all 107 of the immortal acupoints suddenly began to tremble in unison as if they were resonating with one another, and the surrounding world's origin qi began to surge rapidly into them.

Upon entering Han Li's body, the world's origin qi was converted into bursts of pure immortal spiritual power that flowed through his meridians like a turbulent river.

It seemed that the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts had finally run its course, and it slowly ceased its operation before stopping entirely.

Han Li slumped to the ground in an utterly exhausted fashion, looking as if he didn't have a single ounce of strength left in his body.

After laying still for a while, he summoned a restorative pill before devouring it, then sat up straight and closed his eyes to meditate.

A long while later, he opened his eyes, and the crimson coloration of his complexion had largely faded, clearly indicating that he had mostly recovered from his injuries.

After taking a deep breath, he rose to his feet, and as he felt the immense immortal spiritual powers coursing through his body, he couldn't help but clench his fists in excitement.

The sequence of events that had unfolded just now had been extremely perilous. It seemed that there had been a residual soul fragment left in the giant rat carcass, or perhaps the skeleton had developed its own sentient will over the course of countless years. In any case, it had attempted to use its vast baleful qi to infiltrate Han Li's spiritual sense.

In the face of such an enormous influx of baleful qi, he had been completely immobilized, and even if the average High Zenith cultivator had been in his place, their soul would've been destroyed long ago, forcing them to surrender their body to the green rat.

It was only thanks to the combination of his Profound Baleful Spirit Arts and his tremendous spiritual sense that Han Li was just barely able to weather the storm, and he had reaped some significant rewards during the process.

With 107 immortal acupoints opened, he was now only a single step away from reaching the High Zenith Stage.

However, the obvious downside to all of this was that there was now an enormous amount of baleful qi deposited in his body, and that was rather concerning to him.

Chapter 587: Shared

After taking a moment to compose himself, Han Li turned his attention back to the giant rat carcass nearby.

At this point, the baleful qi emanating from it was far sparser than before.

Instead of immediately approaching the carcass, Han Li made a hand seal to reactivate the array around it, speeding up the process of baleful qi dissipation.

Close to an hour later, all of the baleful qi in the carcass had finally been expelled.

At this moment, the skeleton was looking even more translucent than before, to the point that Han Li could almost see the spiritual power flowing through it.

Han Li inspected his surroundings momentarily before sweeping a sleeve through the air to stow away the carcass and the array tools around it, then began flying back up the ravine as a streak of azure light.

On the stone cliff at the top of the ravine, Jin Tong was pacing back and forth with an anxious expression while occasionally peering down into the ravine.

"Settle down, Jin Tong. I'm sure Master is fine," Xiao Bai said as it laid on the ground with a bored look on its face.

"I can't just sit around and do nothing! There's not much time left until the 20 years run out, yet Uncle still hasn't come out yet. Something must've happened to him! I have to go down there!" Jin Tong decided with a grim expression.

Daoist Xie drifted over to her side to stop her, then said, "I'll go. I'm a puppet, so I'll be less affected by the baleful qi in the ravine."

A grateful look appeared on Jin Tong's face upon hearing this, and she was just about to say something when she suddenly turned her gaze back to the ravine.

A streak of azure light was racing up from down below, and it broke through the dense baleful qi before quickly arriving atop the cliff.

The azure light faded to reveal none other than Han Li, and a displeased look immediately appeared on Jin Tong's face, but before she had a chance to complain to Han Li for his belated return, her expression suddenly changed drastically as she exclaimed, "Uncle! Your cultivation base..."

Xiao Bai and Daoist Xie also approached Han Li, and a stunned look appeared on the former's face as it exclaimed in elation, "Master, you've reached the pinnacle of the Golden Immortal Stage! How?"

"You're certainly never one to disappoint, Fellow Daoist Han," Daoist Xie praised.

"Did you find some treasure down there and eat it without telling me? Is that why your cultivation base suddenly went up by so much?" Jin Tong yelled in an accusatory voice.

However, she then noticed that there was something different about Han Li's physical appearance, and she asked, "Also, why have your eyes suddenly turned gray? They look so cool!"

Han Li's expression changed slightly upon hearing this, and he raised a hand to conjure up a mirror formed by water vapor.

Sure enough, his pupils had indeed turned gray, giving him a rather similar appearance to Mo Yu.

It looks like Mo Yu wasn't telling me the full truth about the Profound Baleful Spirit Arts, after all, Han Li thought to himself as he heaved a internal sigh.

Jin Tong was a little concerned by Han Li's silence, and she hurriedly asked, "What's wrong, Uncle? Did something happen?"

"I'll tell you about what happened in the ravine another time. For now, come with me, I found some things that should be of help to you in the ravine," Han Li replied.

"So there really is a treasure down there?" Jin Tong exclaimed as her eyes lit up with excitement.

"But I didn't sense anything..." Xiao Bai mused with a puzzled expression.

"You'll see what it is once we get there. Brother Xie, I'll have to trouble you to keep overseeing the array up here in our absence," Han Li said as he turned to Daoist Xie.

After that, he took another glance at his own reflection in the mirror that he had conjured up, only to discover that his pupils had returned to their original color.

Daoist Xie nodded in response, and Han Li cupped his fist toward it in a grateful salute, then flew back down into the ravine as a streak of azure light, taking Jin Tong and Xiao Bai with him.

Before long, the three of them had all vanished into the baleful qi down below.

After absorbing all of the baleful qi in the giant rat carcass, Han Li had become far more sensitive to baleful qi, and his body's rejection of baleful qi had also diminished significantly.

At the same time, the effect that the surrounding baleful qi had on him had become virtually negligible, and he was even able to control the baleful qi on a very rudimentary level.

Upon returning to the bottom of the ravine, Han Li made his way over to the giant rat carcass, then began making a quick string of hand seals.

A burst of invisible force erupted out of his body to force back the surrounding baleful qi, creating a space that was completely devoid of baleful qi.

After that, he swept a sleeve through the air to release two streaks of light, one golden and one white, and they transformed into Jin Tong and Xiao Bai.

As soon as she appeared, Jin Tong's brows immediately furrowed slightly as she complained, "There's so much baleful qi here..."

In contrast, Xiao Bai's gaze was immediately drawn to the giant rat carcass.

Upon noticing the object of Xiao Bai's fixation, Jin Tong's gaze also fell upon the mountainous green skeleton, and an ecstatic look appeared on her face as she rushed toward it as a streak of golden light.

However, she had only just begun flying toward the carcass when she was pulled back by Han Li.

"Hold on a second! This carcass previously contained a vast amount of baleful qi. Even though the baleful qi has since been eradicated, there's still no guarantee that it won't have a detrimental effect on you, so you should conduct a careful examination before you begin eating," Han Li advised.

"Don't worry about it, this amount of baleful qi isn't enough to hurt me! Let me go, I'll die if I don't eat this thing! After I'm done with it, maybe my cultivation base will go up by a lot as well!" Jin Tong urged in an insistent voice as she wiped away the drool that was flowing down the corner of her lips.

"Can I have some as well, Master?" Xiao Bai asked with a hopeful expression.

"The circumstances are a bit special right now. If eating this skeleton can help Jin Tong make a breakthrough, then we'll stand a better chance against the Gold Devouring Immortal, so I'm afraid we'll have to prioritize Jin Tong for now," Han Li replied.

"Alright..." Xiao Bai sighed in a dejected manner.

"If we can survive this ordeal, I'll make sure to think of some other way to compensate you," Han Li consoled as he patted Xiao Bai on the head.

Jin Tong's attention had been focused on the skeleton this entire time, and her impatience had been mounting by the second. She turned to Han Li with an eager expression as she asked, "Can I begin eating now, Uncle?"

Han Li could only give a resigned nod in response.

Jin Tong was ecstatic, and she immediately sprang forward as a giant golden beetle, digging into the delectable feast that was laid out before her, while Xiao Bai could only watch with an envious expression.

However, not long after Jin Tong began her feast, she suddenly reverted back to her human form, then flew down from the giant rat skeleton, holding a long green bone around the same thickness as a human arm in her hand.

She then flew over to Han Li with a perplexed expression as she said, "Take a look at this bone, Uncle. I almost chipped my tooth when I tried to eat it!"

Han Li accepted the bone from Jin Tong upon hearing this, then began to inspect it closely, upon which a surprised look appeared on his face.

Immediately thereafter, a burst of azure light emerged over his hand as he injected a wisp of immortal spiritual power into the bone, and it immediately began to glow brightly as a rune that Han Li had never seen before appeared on its surface, giving off bursts of powerful spatial fluctuations.

"This is a spatial treasure... Could this be its storage tool?"

Han Li attempted to inject more of his immortal spiritual power into the bone, but all that did was make the bone glow brighter and brighter, and it became as radiant and translucent as a piece of flawless jade, but it displayed no other reaction.

No matter what Han Li tried, all the bone did was glow, and Han Li was unable to refine it, nor figure out what it was meant to be used for.

At this point, Jin Tong had already flown back onto the giant rat skeleton in her golden beetle form.

Some time later, a streak of golden light flew down from the skeleton, then reverted back to Jin Tong's human form, and she wiped the back of her hand over her own lips, then patted her bulging belly as she gave a content burp.

"I'm full. You can have the rest, Xiao Bai," she declared in a generous manner as she pointed at what remained of the skeleton.

Xiao Bai was completely caught off guard by the offer, and Jin Tong gave it a slap on the head as she urged, "What are you waiting for? Hurry up before I change my mind!"

Xiao Bai naturally wanted to take up the offer, but it was still a little hesitant.

"You're one of us, so I can't just have the entire skeleton for myself and leave nothing for you. Besides, this skeleton really is quite filling. Even at the halfway mark, I was already starting to feel a little stuffed.

"It's definitely going to take me a while to digest what I've eaten. On top of that, I ate quite a few of your immortal treasures while I was inside your stomach, so this makes up for that," Jin Tong said.

Xiao Bai was very touched to hear this, but it still didn't immediately take Jin Tong up on her offer. Instead, it turned to Han Li for approval first.

"We'll do as she says," Han Li said with a nod, and Xiao Bai was certainly more than happy to oblige, swelling drastically in size before devouring the rest of the skeleton in a single bite.

After that, it reverted back to its original size, while Jin Tong praised, "I have to admit, your ability to swallow anything in one go is really impressive. Even I can't help but feel envious!"

"Alright, focus on digesting the skeleton now," Han Li said with a smile.

"Now that you mention it, I'm starting to feel a little sleepy..."

Jin Tong gave an involuntary yawn as she spoke, then quickly transformed into a tiny golden beetle before drifting down toward the ground.

Han Li reached out to catch her, then stowed her away into a spirit beast pouch.

"Master, that skeleton contained an enormous amount of energy, so I'll have to go into seclusion for a while as well," Xiao Bai.

Han Li nodded in response, then flipped a hand over to produce another spirit beast pouch before stowing Xiao Bai away as well.

Chapter 588: Final Stand

After the giant rat skeleton was gobbled up by Jin Tong and Xiao Bai, the bottom of the ravine had suddenly become a lot more spacious.

Han Li swept his gaze over his surroundings, and he suddenly noticed that there were some specks of flashing green light at the foot of the cliff face that had previously been concealed by the skeleton.

He approached the area, then leaned down to take a look, and he discovered that there were around a dozen semi-transparent plants growing there, each of which was around a foot in height.

Their leaves were as thin and transparent as ice crystals, and the veins inside were very clearly visible and giving off faint green light.

Han Li swept his spiritual sense over the strange plants briefly, but wasn't unable to detect any special aura from them.

Even though he was unable to identify these plants, it was clear that they were no ordinary plants, considering they had been able to grow at the bottom of a ravine with such immense baleful qi around.

However, he didn't have the time to be pondering such matters.

Thus, he flipped a hand over to produce around a dozen white jade boxes, then uprooted all of the green plants before carefully placing them into the boxes, then adhered a silver talisman onto each of the boxes.

After that, he remained still on the spot for a moment, seemingly in deep thought, then suddenly said, "Come out, Mo Guang."

As soon as his voice trailed off, his shadow suddenly became as black as ink, then gradually elongated to around twice its original length, following which Mo Guang emerged from it.

"Have you made a decision on my proposal, Fellow Daoist Han?" Mo Guang asked with a smile.

"I am aware of the value of a Gray Immortal's body. We're in the midst of a major crisis right now, so if you can maximize the body's value, then I have no reason to turn down your proposal," Han Li replied.

"Rest assured, Fellow Daoist, a Heavenly Devil Contract has been signed between us, so there's a relationship of codependence between us. The more powerful I become, the more powerful you become, so ultimately, it'll still be beneficial to you," Mo Guang said as a hint of elation flashed through his eyes.

"That's true. However, my understanding of Gray Immortals is very limited, so as a safety precaution, I'll have to plant a few restrictions in your body. Will that be acceptable?" Han Li asked.

Mo Guang faltered slightly upon hearing this, then nodded in response. "Of course."

Han Li wasted no further time with words as he joined his middle and index fingers before pointing them at his own glabella, releasing a burst of spiritual sense that fell upon Mo Guang.

After that, he made a hand seal and channeled his Spirit Refinement Technique, upon which several translucent threads shot out of his glabella before flying into Mo Guang's glabella, chest, dantian, and several other vital regions.

Mo Guang gave a muffled groan as his face became slightly twisted with pain, but he merely suffered in silence.

Some time later, the pain etched on his face faded, and Han Li removed his fingers from his own glabella as he declared, "These restrictions won't affect you in any way under normal circumstances, but once you enter the Gray Immortal's body, if you inadvertently fall under the control of its residual soul or something like that and try to do something out of line, then those restrictions will activate on their own.

"If that happens, even I may not be able to react in time to stop the restrictions from taking effect."

"Rest assured, Fellow Daoist Han, these restrictions will never have to take effect," Mo Guang said with a smile.

"That would naturally be best. Before you begin refining the Gray Immortal's body into an avatar, I'll have to trouble you to give me a detailed rundown of the refinement process," Han Li said with a serious expression.

Mo Guang nodded in response and did as he was told.

Han Li listened to the refinement process that was being described while comparing it against the contents of the jade slip that he had been given by Mo Guang earlier, raising questions whenever there was something that he didn't understand.

Three days later, a triangular array with Black Marrow Crystals embedded onto it had taken shape at the bottom of the ravine. Han Li and Mo Guang were standing on either side of the array, while the Gray Immortal's body was placed at its center.

The two of them exchanged a glance, then sat down with their legs crossed in unison, making a hand seal while chanting a collective incantation.

As the Black Marrow Crystals in the array began to lit up, a black flame that wasn't giving off any heat rose up at the center of the array, enveloping the Gray Immortal's body to commence the refinement process.

Close to a year passed by in the blink of an eye.

The bottom of the ravine was teeming with baleful qi, and the triangular array was completely enshrouded in a cloud of dense black mist.

Han Li was seated with his legs crossed around 30 feet away from the array with a layer of azure light shimmering over his body, and waves of golden ripples were also spreading from his body, giving off peculiar energy fluctuations.

Moments later, a burst of black baleful qi suddenly drifted out of his face, then flashed momentarily before vanishing again.

Shortly thereafter, Han Li opened his eyes, and his pupils were glowing a bright silver color.

Recently, his eyes had been periodically taking on this gray color, and the timing and duration of these bouts of eye color changes were seemingly completely haphazard.

Furthermore, with each successive onset, Han Li could sense a burst of baleful qi deep in his consciousness becoming stronger and stronger, while an unreasonable sense of aggression rose up in his heart.

If it weren't for his tremendous spiritual sense, he would've most likely already fallen prey to this aggressive intent.

Han Li exhaled as the layer of baleful qi over his face gradually faded, and his pupils also returned to normal, following which he closed his eyes to meditate once again.

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Two months later.

A burst of loud rumbling suddenly rang out from the bottom of the ravine, and the dense baleful qi there began to churn violently.

The baleful qi rose up until it had almost spilled out of the entrance of the ravine, and a perplexed look appeared in the eyes of Daoist Xie as it observed the unfolding scene from above.

At this moment, there was an enormous vortex of baleful qi that was swirling violently as it converged toward the center of the triangular array.

Outside the array, Han Li and Mo Guang were standing with their hands clasped behind their backs, and both of them were looking rather weary.

"My sincerest apologies, Fellow Daoist Han. I thought that the refinement process would be complete in just 64 days, never did I think that it would take this long," Mo Guang said while intently scrutinizing the enormous baleful qi vortex at the center of the array.

"It's fine, we still have enough time. How confident are you in your ability to complete the fusion process?" Han Li asked as his gaze fell upon the Gray Immortal body at the center of the array.

Compared with when it was first discovered, the body had grown significantly in stature, and it was also looking more supple and full of vitality. Its wizened and sinister features had also become a lot softer, and it was finally beginning to resemble a living person.

"Truth be told, my chances of success are only at around 50%. If I can successfully take over this body, my cultivation base will rise all the way to the Golden Immortal Stage, and I could even progress straight to the late-Golden Immortal Stage. However, if I fail, then I'll be trapped in this body, doomed to become sustenance for it," Mo Guang replied with a wry smile.

"Why did you propose this method if there's such a major element of risk involved?" Han Li asked.

"I had no choice! Your cultivation base has been progressing at an extraordinary rate, and all of your spirit pets and puppets are also far more powerful than I am. Right now, I'm nothing more than a piece of redundant baggage for you. If I don't take such this leap of faith, I'll eventually just be completely forgotten or abandoned altogether," Mo Guang sighed.

"That's a very interesting way of looking at things," Han Li replied in an ambiguous fashion.

"Alright, here I go. Wish me luck, Fellow Daoist Han," Mo Guang said, then flew into the swirling vortex as a black shadow.

A resounding boom rang out, and the Gray Immortal's body at the center of the triangular array suddenly sprang bolt upright.

Its eyes were still a completely lifeless gray color, but its mouth had gaped open to an extreme extent.

Han Li watched as Mo Guang flew headfirst into the body's mouth, quickly entering its belly as a stream of black mist.

Immediately thereafter, the Gray Immortal's body began to tremble in an uncontrollable fashion while moving its own limbs around erratically in a jerky and uncoordinated fashion.

Furthermore, holes that resembled countless immortal acupoints had emerged all over its body, and they were devouring the black baleful qi in the ravine in a frenzy.

This spectacle lasted an entire month before the vortex of baleful qi in the ravine finally disappeared, and at this point, the Gray Immortal's body had already returned to normal, but it was still hovering in mid-air in a completely still manner.

Han Li was standing nearby, and he swept his spiritual sense over the body, only to find that it wasn't giving off any energy fluctuations.

If it weren't for his connection to Mo Guang through their Heavenly Devil Contract, he would've already been led to believe that Mo Guang had already been devoured by the Gray Immortal's body as sustenance.

Han Li shook his head as he heaved a faint sigh.

All of a sudden, he raised an eyebrow before sweeping a sleeve through the air to summon Jin Tong, then asked, "How did it go? Have you consolidated your cultivation base?"

"After eating the two pills you gave me, I've consolidated my current cultivation base, but I haven't been able to go any further beyond that," Jin Tong replied with a slightly disappointed expression.

Han Li was rather amused by Jin Tong's disappointed expression, and he said, "The High Zenith Stage is a major hurdle that's extremely difficult to overcome. Just look at how those guys were fighting tooth and nail for High Zenith Pills back in the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor! All you had to do to reach the High Zenith Stage was eat half a skeleton, how could you still be unsatisfied?"

Seven days ago, Jin Tong had suddenly awakened and reached the early-High Zenith Stage.

Furthermore, it seemed that she hadn't been afflicted by any of the five decays, much to Han Li's amazement.

Chapter 589: Awakening

"If only I could've reached the early-High Zenith Stage. That way, we'd have a much easier time against that guy," Jin Tong sighed.

A pang of sympathy welled up in Han Li's heart upon seeing this. It seemed that Jin Tong had been forced to mature a lot during the time that they had been pursued by the Gold Devouring Immortal.

However, what Jin Tong said next immediately made him realize that she was still just the same greedy little girl as before.

"This body looks really good, Uncle! Should I eat it as well? Maybe that'll allow me to get to the mid-High Zenith Stage!"

"This is the body of a Gray Immortal, and it's filled with baleful qi. Are you sure you want to eat it?" Han Li asked with an exasperated expression.

Jin Tong immediately began shaking her head vigorously upon hearing this. "On second thoughts, I still haven't completely digested what I ate earlier. Xiao Bai has a much better appetite than I do, so it can have this body..."

Right at this moment, the sound of breathing suddenly rang out from the body, and Han Li hurriedly approached it to discover that its chest was heaving slightly as if it had begun breathing.

Furthermore, its eyes had fallen shut, and its eyeballs were frantically darting around beneath its eyelids, as if it had fallen into some type of nightmare and was desperately trying to wake up, but to no avail.

Jin Tong was very startled to see this, and she asked, "Why is this thing suddenly alive again? And by the looks of it... Is it having a nightmare?"

Han Li offered no response, and he suddenly recalled what he had seen back in the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor. At the time, Mo Yu's body had also been a living corpse, but it had been unable to awaken due to the lack of a soul.

The fact that this body had been successfully resurrected meant that the refinement process and the integration of Mo Guang had been successful, but why was it still unconscious? What was the problem?

After a prolonged period of deep thought, an enlightened look suddenly appeared in Han Li's eyes.

Aside from the restoration of Mo Yu's soul, there had been one more vital contributing factor to the awakening of the body in the Infernal Frost Immortal Manor, and that was the Origin Void Pill!

Back then, Wyrn 3 had gone to great lengths to seek out Han Li to refine an Origin Void Pill for her, and that definitely wasn't a pointless gesture. As it turned out, the Origin Void Pill had played a pivotal role in Mo Yu's resurrection.

With that in mind, Han Li immediately flipped a hand over to produce an Origin Void Pill, then squeezed the Gray Immortal's cheeks between his fingers to force its mouth open before feeding it the pill.

After that, Han Li retreated back to around 30 feet away to continue observing in silence.

Jin Tong was rather perplexed to see this, but she didn't ask any questions as she also retreated back to a safe distance away with Han Li.

A short while later, a loud burp rang out, and a plume of dense black smoke billowed out of the Gray Immortal's mouth.

An apprehensive look appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this, and he immediately dragged Jin Tong behind himself while channeling his Spirit Refinement Technique.

Right at this moment, Mo Guang's voice suddenly rang out from the Gray Immortal's body. "Don't attack, Fellow Daoist Han! It's me!"

After that, the Gray Immortal's body began to move, shaking out its own limbs as if it were growing accustomed to itself.

"Prove it!" Han Li demanded in a cold voice, not letting down his guard in the slightest.

"Mo Guang" hesitated momentarily, then made a hand seal before opening his mouth, releasing a cloud of inky black baleful qi, which transformed into a black scroll that slowly unfurled itself in front of Han Li.

Han Li swept his spiritual sense over the scroll to discover that it was the Heavenly Devil Contract that they had signed, but even so, he remained wary and vigilant.

Mo Guang could sense the restrictions that had been planted in his body by Han Li's Spirit Refinement Technique, and he opened his mouth to swallow the black scroll again, then sighed in a resigned manner, "Your cautious nature really will never change, will it, Fellow Daoist Han?"

"If I wasn't this cautious, Ma Liang would still be your contractual partner right now," Han Li said in an indifferent voice.

"I didn't really think much about this in the beginning, but the more time I spend with you, the more I come to realize that the likes of Ma Liang really couldn't ever hope to hold a candle to you," Mo Guang said with a smile.

"Instead of trying to flatter me, why don't you explain your current cultivation base? Why is it different from what you told me it would be?" Han Li asked in a cold voice.

At this moment, Mo Guang was at the early-High Zenith Stage, but his cultivation was constantly fluctuating like a flame that was swaying in the wind, unable to find any semblance of stability.

Jin Tong could hear the animosity in Han Li's voice, and she didn't suppress her early-High Zenith Stage aura any longer as she began glowering at Mo Guang with an unfriendly expression.

Mo Guang hurriedly raised his hands in surrender upon seeing this, then explained, "Please don't misunderstand, Fellow Daoist Li. Only after I entered this body did I realize that it was far more powerful than I anticipated. I had been completely suppressed by it, and if you hadn't fed me that pill in a timely fashion, I would've most likely already ceased to exist by now."

"The integration process has only just been completed, yet you're already at the early-High Zenith Stage. It doesn't look to me like you were in any danger at all, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang," Han Li countered in a skeptical fashion.

"I'm only at the True Immortal Stage at the moment, so I was actually biting off far more than I could chew by trying to take over this body. As a result, my cultivation base is quite unstable at the moment. Once it stabilizes, I'll be back down to the late-Golden Immortal Stage. At the very most, I can only stay at the High Zenith Stage for a short time," Mo Guang replied with a wry smile.

Through their spiritual connection, Han Li could sense that Mo Guang's aura was indeed gradually falling back down to the late-Golden Immortal Stage, and the apprehension in his heart finally faded.

"It looks like you're telling the truth. In that case, I'll place my trust in you. Rest assured, and take some time to recuperate, I'll keep a look out for you," Han Li said.

"You have my thanks," Mo Guang replied, then immediately sat down with his legs crossed and began to meditate.

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In the sky above an azure mountain range, a giant ball of semi-transparent white light was hovering in mid-air.

The ball of light was several dozen acres in size, and there were waves of white light constantly rippling over its surface, presenting a kaleidoscope-like effect that entranced the beholder.

The ball of light was extremely eye-catching, but none of the nearby demon beasts dared to approach it. On the contrary, all of them were frantically attempting to get as far away from it as possible.

A giant golden beetle could be seen at the center of the ball of white light, and it was none other than the High Zenith Stage Gold Devouring Immortal.

At this moment, it was completely still, as if it had been frozen in place, and its eyes were half-open in a rather dreary fashion.

Furthermore, a tiny white vortex could be seen swirling around in each of its pupils.

If these white vortexes were to be magnified by a hundredfold, one would discover that they were formed by countless specks of white light, within each of which was a flashing image.

In one of the images, the Gold Devouring Immortal had already returned to the Insect Race, and it had led the Insect Race army to eradicate all of the nearby Beast Race settlements, securing a vast amount of territory and resources in the process.

Not long after that, another Gold Devouring Immortal appeared in the primordial land in one of the other images.

After some struggle, it was able to hunt down and devour this Gold Devouring Immortal too...

In an underground cave deep below the Insect Race's territory, the Gold Devouring Immortal was curled up into a ball on a massive golden stone bed, and there was a pained look on its face.

Its entire body was giving off extremely radiant golden light alongside tremendous aura fluctuations that were undulating incessantly while steadily trending up toward a bottleneck.

Right at this moment, the aura fluctuations surging out of its body became even more violent, and they were crashing against the bottleneck like turbulent waves.

With each wave that swept through the underground cave, it would tremble violently as countless rocks shards came clattering down from above.

Resounding booms rang out one after the other, and the intervals between them were steadily shrinking.

All the while, the golden light radiating from the Gold Devouring Immortal's body was becoming brighter and brighter, until it was as radiant as the sun.

The golden light filled the entire underground cave, and it was rippling like water. Even though the walls of the cave had been reinforced by the Gold Devouring Immortal, countless cracks were still appearing on their surfaces, and these cracks were gradually widening by the second.

Right at this moment, a loud screeching sound suddenly rang out from within the golden light, following which a tremendous aura erupted forth.

The surrounding underground cave was instantly completely destroyed without being able to put any resistance, and the entire mountain also disintegrated.

Countless rocks of different sizes came plummeting out of the sky, only to instantly be repelled upon contact with the golden light.

At this moment, there was a massive golden cocoon hovering at the center of the golden light, and it was riddled with profound golden patterns that were giving off formidable law power fluctuations.

The nearby world's origin qi converged in a frenzy to form balls of radiant golden light that were constantly streaming into the golden cocoon, making it thicker and thicker. At the same time bursts of thunderous rumbling were ringing out incessantly within the cocoon, as if something terrifying were taking shape.

Within the golden cocoon, the Gold Devouring Immortal had transformed into a tall and imposing man with bushy eyebrows and a square face that was riddled with golden patterns, presenting a rather peculiar sight to behold.

Rays of golden light were constantly surging into the man's body from the surrounding golden cocoon, and his aura was still steadily elevating.

"Finally! I've finally returned to the Great Encompassment Stage!" the man roared with excitement as he threw his head back in exaltation, but right at this moment, his surroundings suddenly shuddered violently, following which a series of cracks emerged over the surrounding scene.

In the end, the entire scene shattered like a pane of glass, then disintegrated into specks of translucent light.

The man's ecstatic expression stiffened as he stood completely rooted to the spot.

Chapter 590: Final Preparations

In the sky above the azure mountain range, the ball of white light began flashing erratically as countless white runes surged out of it.

A dull thump then rang out as the ball of light abruptly exploded, scattering into countless specks of white spiritual light.

The Gold Devouring Immortal shuddered as a hint of lucidity slowly returned to its glazed-over eyes, and the white vortexes deep within its pupils faded as it looked around with a bewildered expression.

"What happened? Haven't I already returned to the Insect Race and progressed to the Great Encompassment Stage? What am I doing here?" it roared in an alarmed and furious voice.

All of a sudden, its expression stiffened as it cast its gaze forward.

It had detected the aura of its target, the target that it was already supposed to have captured and devoured, and its aura had become significantly more powerful than before!

Could it be that I fell prey to some type of illusion?

The fury in the Gold Devouring Immortal's eyes gradually faded as it turned to inspect its surroundings.

It was a calm and pleasant day with a warm breeze blowing over the azure mountain range, and there didn't appear to be anything amiss.

The Gold Devouring Immortal quickly withdrew its gaze as a hesitant look appeared on its face.

It raised one of its front limbs before extending it forward, and the golden light radiating from its body suddenly converged in front of it to form a circular golden array.

There were countless golden runes dancing within the array, and it seemed that some type of secret technique was being used.

All of a sudden, a stunned look appeared in the Gold Devouring Immortal's eyes as it exclaimed, "I've already been here for 20 years!"

A fearful look then appeared on its face as it hurriedly began scanning its surroundings again.

The Gold Devouring Immortal had been residing in the primordial land for countless years, so it was naturally far more familiar with the primordial land than an outsider like Han Li.

The Insect Race and the Beast Race were nothing more than insignificant races situated on the outskirts of the primordial land, while the true rulers of the land were the four monarch races.

All of the four monarch races were extremely powerful and presided over enormous territories, claiming all of the regions of the primordial land with the most abundant spiritual qi.

Furthermore, there were countless powerful beings among their ranks, including a whole host of Golden Immortals and Jade Immortals, and each of the four races was led by a Great Encompassment Stage patriarch, the four of whom were collectively known as the four sages.

The Gold Devouring Immortal was already at the late-High Zenith Stage, so it didn't fear the four monarch races, but it was very much apprehensive of the four primordial sages.

At this point, it had already entered the territory of one of the four monarch races, namely the Almighty Rat Race.

The Gold Devouring Immortal had come all this way in pursuit of Han Li and Jin Tong, but it had been inexplicably trapped here in an illusion for 20 years.

20 years was not a very long time, but the Gold Devouring Immortal knew that the only ones in the primordial land capable of trapping it in an illusion for this duration were the four sages.

With that in mind, a contemplative look appeared in its eyes.

It was said that Patriarch Gu of the Almighty Rat Race was a mysterious figure who was barely ever in the primordial land, and he wasn't supposed to be particularly adept in illusions, either. Instead, the Heavenly Fox Race, which directly neighbored the Almighty Rat Race, was far more skilled in casting illusions.

Could it be that the Great Encompassment Stage patriarch of the Heavenly Fox Race did this to me? But why? Is he trying to warn me not to set foot in the territory of the four monarch races?

Countless thoughts were racing through the Gold Devouring Immortal's mind, but in the end, its greed won out over its caution, and it continued onward as a giant ball of golden light.

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Above the sheer cliff at the entrance of the dark ravine, two balls of light, one golden and one white, were hovering in mid-air, giving off tremendous auras.

The balls of light contained none other than Jin Tong and Xiao Bai.

Even though both of them had become significantly more powerful than before, they were still unable to acclimate themselves to the baleful qi at the bottom of the ravine, so they had come up to the surface to cultivate.

Right at this moment, the ball of golden light suddenly faded to reveal Jin Tong, and she turned to a certain direction with a grim look on her face.

Deep within the ravine, Han Li was seated with his legs crossed on a large rock, channeling his immortal spiritual power while assessing the state of the baleful qi in his own body.

Mo Guang was also seated with his legs crossed nearby, and black light was flashing over his body as he continued to absorb the baleful qi in the surrounding area.

Even though he had successfully taken over this body, further consolidation was still required to complete the integration process.

At this moment, the body was looking even more supple than before. Its skin had become clean and smooth, while its previously wizened muscles had been completely filled out. Dressed in a black robe, it appeared no different from a normal person.

All of a sudden, Han Li's eyes sprang open, and Jin Tong's voice rang out within his mind.

"We've got trouble, Uncle! That guy must've woken up and is coming after us right now!"

Han Li immediately rose to his feet upon hearing this, then took a moment to calculate the time, following which he murmured to himself, "It's been 20 years on the dot... Looks like that voice wasn't lying to me."

He then turned to take a glance at Mo Guang, and he decided not to disturb Mo Guang from his cultivation as he began to ascend up the ravine as a streak of azure light.

Mere moments following Han Li's departure, Mo Guang opened his eyes as he cast his gaze upward with a contemplative look in his eyes.

It didn't take long before Han Li arrived on the cliff where Jin Tong was, and both Jin Tong and Xiao Bai were standing before him.

"Uncle..." Jin Tong began in a nervous voice, but didn't seem to know what to say.

"Jin Tong, are you Gold Devouring Immortal fearful of baleful qi?" Han Li suddenly asked as he glanced at the dense baleful qi in the ravine.

"Not really, but we definitely don't like baleful qi, either," Jin Tong replied.

"If it was possible for us to get away, we would've escaped from that Gold Devouring Immortal long ago. Seeing as we can't get away, we may as well just wait here for it and spare it the trouble of having to keep chasing after us!" Han Li said with an amused smile.

"My thoughts exactly! Both of us have become way more powerful than before, and we've got that phony, Mo Guang, as well! With all of our powers combined, I'm sure we'll be able to win!" Jin Tong replied as her eyes lit up with excitement.

"Don't forget about me!" Xiao Bai protested in an unconvincing voice.

"Oh yeah, we've got Xiao Bai as well... You should be able to withstand at least one attack..." Jin Tong said as she patted Xiao Bai on the head.

"While it's true that all of us have become a lot more powerful, we can't afford to grow complacent in the face of a late-High Zenith Stage Gold Devouring Immortal. Jin Tong, how much longer will it take to get here?" Han Li asked with a grim expression.

"At its current speed, it should be able to get here in about a month," Jin Tong replied.

"That should be enough time," Han Li murmured to himself upon hearing this.

Jin Tong and Xiao Bai could tell that Han Li had a plan, and both of them were feeling much more reassured.

"Continue cultivating here in the meantime. Jin Tong, make sure to keep constant tabs on the Gold Devouring Immortal, and tell me right away if anything changes," Han Li instructed.

"You can count on me, Uncle!" Jin Tong replied.

After that, Han Li flew back into the ravine, and he quickly reached the bottom.

Mo Guang had already gotten up from his cultivation, and upon spotting Han Li, he immediately rose to his feet before cupping his fist in a salute.

Han Li briefly relayed what he had been told by Jin Tong to Mo Guang, then added, "We'll be requiring your power to oppose the Gold Devouring Immortal, Fellow Daoist Mo Guang."

"I'm happy to help. I'll begin preparing right away. I can't promise too much, but at the very least, I should be able to maintain my High Zenith Stage powers for 15 minutes when it comes time to battle," Mo Guang replied.

"That's good to hear," Han Li said with a smile, while Mo Guang returned to his seated cultivation.

A contemplative look appeared on Han Li's face, and swept a sleeve through the air to summon a large stack of array tools of different colors, while Daoist Xie also appeared beside him amid a flash of golden light.

"Daoist Xie, please help me set up these arrays here," Han Li said.

Daoist Xie nodded in response, then took some of the array tools from Han Li, and the two of them

The two of them were busy at work for close to half a month before completing the arrays.

At this moment, Han Li was hovering in mid-air while chanting an incantation, and specks of light were flashing incessantly throughout the entire ravine.

Bursts of tremendous power were also surging through the area, some of which were extremely hard and strong, while others were more soft and resilient, and they were all working together to stir up the surrounding baleful qi.

All of a sudden, all of the specks of light and the bursts of power faded, leaving no trace behind, and the unrest in the baleful qi also quickly subsided.

Han Li gave a pleased nod upon seeing this, then descended to the bottom of the ravine, where he sat down with his legs crossed before sweeping a sleeve through the air, summoning a series of immortal treasures, all of which were glowing radiantly while giving off bursts of law power fluctuations.

Han Li picked up these immortal treasures before examining them one by one, making some final preparations for the upcoming battle.

He had already done everything that he could to brace himself for the imminent storm, but the opponent was going to be a late-High Zenith Stage Gold Devouring Immortal, so he had to be extra meticulous.

After carefully examining all of the immortal treasures, he stowed them away again, and all that was left on the ground at this moment was the Profound Heavenly Gourd.

Han Li observed the gourd for a moment, then picked it up and began to examine its opening.

That part was still lighter in coloration than the rest of the gourd, but it had become a lot darker than before, and the green light emanating from the gourd had also become brighter.

A faint smile appeared on Han Li's face upon seeing this.

Even though he had been fleeing from the Gold Devouring Immortal this entire time, he had made sure to consistently water the gourd using the spirit liquid from the Heaven Controlling Vial, and it was clearly working.

At this rate, it should be able to reach full maturity in no more than a century.

Han Li examined the gourd for a moment longer, then opened his mouth to release a burst of azure light that vanished into it.

A layer of countless tiny runes instantly emerged over its surface, and the runes were constantly flowing like water while releasing bursts of law power fluctuations that kept all of the baleful qi within a radius of several dozen feet at bay.